DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 184 572 IR 008 263

AUTHOR Layne, Elizabeth N.
TITLE Continuing Education Services. How Public Libraries Can Expand Educational Horizons for All Americans. A Background Paper for the White House Conference on Library and Information Services.
INSTITUTION National Citizens Emergency Committee to Save Our Libraries, New York, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY Council on Library Resources, Inc., Washington, D.C.; J. M. Kaplan Fund, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 48p.; For related documents, see IR 008 263-266.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; Adult Learning; *Adult Programs; *Adult Students; Community Information Services; *Educational Counseling; Information Services; Library Services; *Public Libraries; Reference Services
IDENTIFIERS *Learners Advisory Services; *White House Conference Library Info Services

ABSTRACT

This booklet, prepared as background information for the White House Conference, describes recent developments in providing learners' advisory services to adults beyond traditional school and college age. In particular, it focuses on the Woodbridge, New Jersey, Public Library, one of nine participating libraries in an Adult Independent Learner Project which provided in depth advisory and information support characterized by a close working relationship between the learner and the libraries. Training workshops for librarians stressed four major subject areas: (1) understanding the adult learner, (2) decision making and educational planning, (3) interviewing techniques, and (4) guiding the learner in the use of study materials. A principal obstacle to the success of this type program has been librarian resistance, which is being countered through special training, time, and dedication. Other more traditional programs, e.g., correspondence courses, external degree programs and proficiency examinations, are being used in many locations to reach the adult learner. The future of these services is a matter of professional assessment, adaptability, and confidence, but most of all, of priorities on the part of libraries and librarians. (RAA)

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CONTINUING EDUCATION SERVICES

How Public Libraries Can Expand Educational Horizons for All Americans

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IR008263

A Background Paper for the
White House Conference on Library and Information Services
published by the
National Citizens Emergency Committee to Save Our Public Libraries in cooperation with the
National Commission on Libraries and Information Science
American Library Association
Urban Libraries Council

INTRODUCTION

The last third of a century has seen major changes in the role of the public library in American life. In that period—the thirty-three years since the end of World War II—television has become a standard fixture in every household; supermarkets and drugstores have installed mass-market paperback book racks which place recreation reading within everyone's reach; significant advances have occurred in a whole new field of science and exploration—outer space; higher education has stimulated an unparalleled quest for information and learning, with increasing emphasis on independent research, thinking, and writing; and the daily lives of all Americans have become increasingly dependent upon reading—tax forms, instructions on medicine bottles, warnings on cans, travel directions, daily newspapers, checks, official communications from government agencies, even junk mail.

Gone are the days when the public library was simply the community's bookshelf. Today the public library is grappling with a whole new set of demands upon it—demands from students, from the increasing numbers of senior citizens, from adults seeking self-education, from people with reading disabilities, from the inmates of institutions, from people needing help with job information or career changes, from authors, journalists, and citizen activists. And the process has not stopped yet.

Public libraries are changing from passive repositories to active purveyors of information and knowledge to all those who need it.

This booklet describes recent developments in providing learner's advisory services and educational information to adults who are beyond traditional school and college age. It tells exciting personal stories of how these services have changed the lives of individual library patrons, and

discusses the obstacles that must be overcome before this new role for public libraries can win acceptance in a world where librarians are often more book-oriented than people-oriented.

CONTINUING EDUCATION SERVICES

In October 1976 each householder in the township of Woodbridge, New Jersey, received a letter from the director of the local public library, which said:

> Dear Resident:
>
> I would like to tell you about a very special program your library system is offering. We call it our "self-learner's" program. It is designed for you if you've ever thought of changing your career or investigating career options but did not know how or where to begin or whom to contact. . . . If you seek information and you have a goal in mind, call your library and ask for a learners' adviser. Give yourself a chance to expand your horizons and make your life fuller.
>
> Edwin P. Beckerman,
> *Library Director*

One Woodbridge resident who received the letter was a thirty-nine-year-old letter carrier, who had been home for three months on disability, waiting to learn whether the post office could find him less strenuous work. "Why wait for them to find you a place?" he recalls saying to himself as he read the letter. "Find yourself one—you choose."

Joe Fino (not the man's real name) had been a postman for twelve years. For a long time he had felt that he was stagnating in his job—"like I got on the wrong plane and I was stuck there and couldn't get out." He felt that his work was demeaning: "People see our hands with the mail, they never see our faces. I was on a route for *six years* and they'd ask, 'Are you our regular man?' I was nobody."

Joe Fino was the only member of his family who

finished high school. His father and brothers were construction workers, and to the teenage Fino, a job meant "that guy with a pick and shovel out in the street, or the other one tarring the roof, or the big-deal factory job."

When he first went to work, the state employment office sent him to a job opening in a plastics lamination factory. "As I left the employment office, they shouted after me, 'Make sure he gives you $1.25 an hour.' The employer offered me $1.15 an hour and refused to give more. I went home and told my mom they wouldn't give me the wage the people said I was supposed to get. My mom told me to go back down there and take the job anyway."

He took that job, and another and another—all unskilled. Of all the tasks at which he worked before he joined the post office, Fino most enjoyed repairing home water-softener devices because "people were glad to see you . . . they treated you like a doctor." Two years in the Army gave him a crack at the GI Bill, and in the early 1970s Fino started taking a few courses at the community college just to improve himself, because he always felt he could do something different. "It's just that I never had the opportunity—the push or the help—to try anything."

At their first appointment, Fino and the librarian, Jeff Kesper, a personable, quiet-spoken man in his early thirties, spent half an hour talking in private about Fino's work experience, his education, what he hoped to accomplish in his learning project, how quickly he wanted to progress. They talked about whether Fino preferred to learn by reading books, by formal classes, by using audiovisual materials, by informal discussion; they also discussed where Fino preferred to learn—at home, in a classroom, in the library, or at some other location.

Joe Fino was relieved that the librarian just accepted him. "Jeff might have asked 'Why?' but he didn't. He had the attitude that I was there because I wanted help and he told me what help the library had to offer. It was great to have a person sit down and listen rather than saying, 'Look over there at those books. Next.'"

Fino told Kesper that he felt he knew a lot more "than these people where I work, but the things I know are not able to come out because the job doesn't call for it." But he didn't know what other type of work he wanted.

The librarian met with Joe Fino every week for several months. He arranged for Fino to take an aptitude-interest test at a nearby center. Fino brought in a leaflet on state job opportunities; the library had books that described those jobs and others in more detail. While going through the books, his eye was caught by the descriptions of jobs in real estate sales. The qualifications seemed to fit what he knew about himself and what he had learned from the aptitude test. Particularly attractive was the idea of helping people—"I'd like to sell a house to somebody that loved it."

The librarian located a variety of books on real estate, asked Fino to look them over and to let him know his opinion of them. "I've been to libraries before, where you find a book, take it home for two weeks, put it down, and never read it because you're too busy. But here, when somebody says to you, 'Rate this book for me,' it gives you an extra push, like somebody has some confidence in you."

Joe Fino also talked with acquaintances in the real estate business. After six to eight weeks of exploration, Fino decided to prepare for the state real estate license exam. He opted to follow a traditional classroom approach rather than continue to work on his own. The librarian found a nearby school that met his requirements. Then, tense and nervous, filled with self-doubt, Fino prepared for his four-hour examination. To help ease Fino's tension, Kesper arranged for him to talk with someone who had recently passed the exam.

The test went well. Joe Fino has his real estate broker's license now. "That was one of the most exciting moments of my life. Whether I use it or not, the fact that I got that license and all the work leading up to it paid off . . . there's no describing what that can do for me."

Still no news about a new post office job assignment. Fino decided to use his time now to become a notary pub-

lic because it tied in with the real estate license. "I said to myself, the more ammunition I have, the better off I'll be." The librarian found out how he could become a notary and Fino went through that procedure as well. "I always felt," he recalled recently, "that if what I was reading or doing at Woodbridge Library didn't work out, it wasn't going to stop there. There was always another avenue." Then the post office came through with an inside job for Fino, which he decided to accept.

Fino is very happy with his work now. He takes most of the phone calls that come into the post office, handling complaints, straightening out problems. The people he deals with are pleased with his work and his superiors are pleased with him, too. He is taking courses at the community college and recently received an A—for the first time in his life—in a course in business law.

What did earning his credentials in real estate do for Joe Fino? He says, "I feel that I have something to back me up now. I can't be as threatened at work as I was before. If for some reason I were let go, I wouldn't have to scratch my head and wonder what I was going to do. I'm not afraid now, because I have a real estate license, some schooling, and I know I can get more.

"Everything came through the library. I was shown what I could do. I was shown how to do it and the rest was up to me. What's more, I'm not afraid to go into the library now and look at all those big books. If I need help, I'll say, hey, somebody help me find what I need."

The Explosion in Adult Learning

Joe Fino's desire to learn a new career is not unusual. A nationwide survey of independent adult learning in America, published in 1977 by Dr. Patrick Penland of the University of Pittsburgh, found that almost 80 percent of all those over eighteen years of age perceive themselves as learners, whether in formal educational programs or self-initiated

learning projects. In this group there are a small number—less than 3 percent of the total adult population—who are engaged *only* in formal courses or school-like activities. The great majority, over three quarters of all adults, plan their own learning projects. They set their own objectives, choose and find their own resources, and evaluate their own progress. A fair number of these people engage in both formal and educational programs and self-initiated projects.

Dr. Penland's findings corroborate the work of earlier research, notably that of Professor Allen Tough, the Canadian whose pioneering studies of self-taught learners startled educators a decade ago. Tough discovered that the average adult is involved in seven major learning projects each year and that he spends two hours a day on learning, at least 70 percent of which is self-planned. "It sounds impossible to most people at first," admits Tough, "but it becomes believable when you realize that we're talking about everything a person deliberately learns, not just school-type subjects. It would include such things as gathering and analyzing data to make a decision about buying certain stocks, mastering a new function in your job or professional work, even spending a couple of hours a week practicing your forehand. As long as you're engaged in a sustained, highly deliberate effort to learn or change, it counts. . . . We've been brainwashed to not think of things as 'learning' unless we learn them from a teacher." Among the self-taught subjects that turn up most frequently are practical home and family skills, small business management, languages, photography, cooking, technical arts like woodworking. Many are job-related. Dr. Penland discovered that self-initiated adult learners are found in every strata of society.

In America, public libraries have traditionally been citadels for the self-taught. The library's role in helping succeeding waves of immigrant adults learn the language and ways of this country is well documented. But how effective are our libraries in helping independent adult learners today—learners that lack the drive of the new immigrant,

or the support and direction given to the formal student by the institution he or she is attending?

The ordinary library reference request is very brief. Seldom is there time for the librarian to probe much below the surface question, which may very well not convey what the user is actually after. Typically there is no continuity for the patron. The librarian who answers his question today will probably not be there to answer his follow-up question tomorrow.

Is there a more effective way for public libraries to serve patrons involved in learning projects than this quick-answer, piecemeal approach? Dr. Penland notes that "libraries are not generally perceived as a significant source of help by a majority of individual adult learners." Nearly 60 percent of Americans, he found, "have never made use of a library to pursue a self-initiated learning project." Among those who do use libraries, use is "frequently limited to simple assistance in locating findings or getting directions." How can the public's perception of the library be altered so that the library's remarkable learning resources may become available to them?

The Birth of the Adult Independent Learner Project

In 1973 nine public libraries, including Woodbridge, New Jersey, joined with the Office of Library Independent Study and Guidance Projects within the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) to seek, in part, an answer to these questions. Together they launched an innovative, experimental program—the Adult Independent Learner Project—designed to provide in-depth, continuing support services to adult learners.

The services identified as being responsive to the independent learner were of two types: (1) advisory services and (2) information support services. These differed significantly from traditional reference service in that they involved a close working relationship between the learner

and the librarian adviser in developing a learning plan and in selecting resources in both the library and the community to implement that learning plan. The process implied a much more intensive interaction between the learner and the librarian adviser than had been practiced in the past. Basically, the librarian adviser would serve as a link between the needs of the learner and the available resources.

Training workshops for librarians were held in each of the participating libraries in four major subject areas: (1) understanding the adult learner; (2) decision-making and educational planning; (3) interviewing techniques; and (4) guiding the learner in the use of study materials. A common data collection and evaluation system was designed and used by the libraries.

The original nine libraries in the CEEB learners' advisory services project were those in Atlanta, Denver, Baltimore (Enoch Pratt), Miami, Portland (Maine), Salt Lake City, St. Louis, Tulsa, and Woodbridge. They were joined by one statewide library system, New York.

The Woodbridge Public Library

The Free Public Library of Woodbridge has one central library and nine branches serving more than 100,000 residents of a twenty-seven-square-mile area of industrial north-central New Jersey. The community falls within the Northeast Corridor—the main traffic route connecting Washington, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. Seven major regional traffic routes slice through the township, and its heart is dissected by one of the most complex interchanges in New Jersey, the junction of four major highways. The major community force holding together the fragmented nine enclaves of the township is the library itself.

Woodbridge is predominantly a white, middle-class, suburban community with at least a third of its population either foreign-born or second-generation Eastern Europeans and Italians—people who came to Woodbridge in the

fifties and sixties to escape the cities. Few professional people live in the township; most residents are blue-collar workers or white-collar clerical or sales personnel employed by one of the numerous manufacturers located in the area—Revlon, Johnson & Johnson, General Motors, Ford, and Hess.

The educational level in the township is below average for adults in New Jersey. Of those twenty-five years old and older in 1970, only 53.4 percent had graduated from high school and only 15 percent had completed one or more years of college. Given the thrust of modern society, the administration and board of Woodbridge library felt that a substantial number of residents would require further job-related training in the future and that many would need to develop interests or skills which had not been developed earlier because of limitations in formal education.

Through its Independent Learner Project, Woodbridge proposed to support adults in the pursuit of learning projects, whether the patron was affiliated with a formal learning structure, pursuing credit-by-examination, seeking job advancement, or learning for self-realization or short-range practical ends. Key elements in providing this service in addition to extensive retraining of the staff included development of a data bank containing information about locally available learning opportunities, educational guidance, counseling services, community organizations, individuals providing educational services, and the like. The library obtained a grant that allowed it to purchase textbooks, reading/study guides, learning packets, and special audiovisual equipment.

The Librarian and the Adult Learner

Joe Fino's learning experience provides useful insights into the characteristics of a librarian/learner relationship. The process Fino went through—the decision-making, the learning steps, the sense of accomplishment from preparing

for and passing a difficult exam, the relationship with a supportive librarian—is what gave Joe Fino the self-esteem that now makes his life so much more enjoyable.

Fino was willing to take full responsibility. He was not looking for someone to make decisions for him. This attitude is crucial to the success of any learner/librarian relationship, which is at heart a cooperative, synergistic relationship, free of the dominant/dependent roles characteristic of the more familiar teacher/pupil or doctor/patient relationships. Here the librarian functions as a facilitator, helping the learner to clarify goals, helping him or her take advantage of available options by gathering information and learning resources, searching out experts, preparing reading lists, making appointments, even going with a learner to a first appointment.

The learner responds by accepting some avenues, rejecting others, but always sharing responsibility for the project. "It's a terribly important part of the relationship," explains Jeff Kesper. "The more you stress the aspect of dual responsibility, the better the chances that you will work together successfully. Right from the beginning, I try to let people know that just as they can expect certain things from me, I expect certain things from them. 'If you tell me you are going to make an appointment or you are going to call someone, I expect you to follow through and let me know how you do. If you take out books, I expect you to read them and if they're no good, I will get you something else.' They are completely on their own and can move at their own pace, but we have to make it clear that they must do their part; we can't carry them along. It won't work."

A Personalized Service

Although a number of independent learners, like Joe Fino, come to the library in response to publicity or advertising, many others are led into the learners' advisory program because of the conscientious work of professional librarians.

"Any good reference librarian tries to get as much infor-

mation from a patron as possible," explains Jacqueline Rapacki, head librarian at the Iselin branch of the Woodbridge library. "We try to avoid the stock situation in which the patron asks if we have any books about horses and the librarian just points to the shelf. We try to talk to the man who wants books about horses while we take him to the shelves, in order to find out whether he is interested in books with pictures of horses, or in books on how to take care of horses, or in books on how to train them.

"We find out, for example, that he wants a book with pictures because he has always wanted to draw horses but has never before had the time. As we talk to him, we might tell him about the learners' advisory service. 'Since you have been doing this on your own, perhaps we can help you develop your interest.'

"Frequently, patrons will turn us down. The idea of a learning adviser is a new concept to most people. Often they fear that it is a teaching service and they don't want that."

Professor Penland discovered during his survey of independent adult learning that "adult learners often feel a strong need to establish the pace, and control the character, of their learning experiences" and, further, that "the desire of individuals to set their own learning pace and to explore their own styles of learning, rather than submit to formal course-oriented experiences, was cited far more frequently as a reason for avoiding formal adult education courses in schools and colleges than were such factors as lack of time, transportation problems, or cost, considerations commonly believed to be significant deterrents to enrollment."

"The next time you see this man in the library," Mrs. Rapacki continues, "you ask him how he's doing. The next time you see a horse book, you pick it up even if it is something that you normally would not get. You may call him up and say you have a new book that he may like. When he begins to feel more comfortable, then he may decide to try working with you. When he is convinced that this is his service, that it works at his pace and at his convenience

and he calls the shots at all times—that's how people sometimes get involved in it."

Although the librarians at Woodbridge have learned they cannot help people who fail to sustain their end of the relationship, many learners not nearly as self-sufficient as Joe Fino have also been helped. Mrs. Rapacki is probably the library's star performer in this regard. She is particularly understanding of women seeking identities of their own outside their homes. She herself first set foot inside a college classroom when the youngest of her four children was in first grade. She started working at Woodbridge library—her first job—six years ago, as soon as she completed her master's degree in library science. Four years ago Mrs. Rapacki started working as a learner's adviser with Pat Gannon. At that time, Mrs. Gannon was forty-one years old and the mother of five children, ranging in age from fifteen to four. Her husband is a skilled laborer, a platemaker in a printing plant. Before she married in 1960, Mrs. Gannon had been an elementary school teacher for five years. Even though she had only partially fulfilled the requirements for a bachelor's degree, those were the days of swollen enrollments, and schools welcomed people with temporary teaching permits. After she married, she dropped her plans to complete the requirements for a teaching certificate because she didn't have anyone to take care of her first four children, who were born very close together, and because her husband wanted her to stay at home.

"I was bored, really, because my oldest son was a very quiet baby. He slept a lot and I was used to being out doing things. Of course, once you have three or four kids, you're pretty busy. In fact, when my sister came back from working abroad, I told her she might as well leave her daughter with me and go teach; no need for both of us to stay home. If anybody had offered me a proposition like that, I would have taken it. I would have been the first one out the door." Later, Pat Gannon also took care of a cousin's child so that her cousin could complete college. When the children got a bit older, Mrs. Gannon worked as

a substitute teacher whenever she could. "I'd come home from teaching pretty tired, but it was a different tired."

She truly enjoyed teaching, but by 1975, when she started taking her youngest child to the children's room at the library, the teaching jobs just weren't there anymore. At the library, she got talking with Mrs. Rapacki about what she might do so as "not to sit around and ferment." Were her old education credits still good? Could she transfer them to a different institution? In the back of her mind she'd always had the idea of nursing as a career, but she figured she was too old, too fat, and just too late to do anything about it.

Mrs. Gannon and Mrs. Rapacki met every week when she brought her daughter in for the preschool program. Months and months went by while Mrs. Gannon tried to figure out what she should do. "What it really got down to," explained Mrs. Rapacki, "was that she was worried about failing. If she never started she couldn't fail."

"When you talk to Mrs. Rapacki," explained Pat Gannon, "she has a way of pulling things from you . . . she tries to find out what you think. Then she can tell you what things you *can* do. She sent me over to Middlesex College to take an aptitude test: even called and made an appointment for me to take the test. She also looked up the requirements for getting into nursing school. I thought you had to be under thirty-five and unmarried and she cleared away that mistaken notion."

The requirements for a nursing candidate at the local college called for at least a B grade in chemistry and biology courses taken within the last seven years. Mrs. Gannon had taken chemistry and biology more than twenty years earlier. The librarian found out where she could retake these courses, then obtained chemistry and biology manuals for her so that she could read through the material and gain some confidence.

Mrs. Gannon took the chemistry course for experience rather than credit. She studied very hard and got an A. "When I did well at the chemistry, I knew I could handle

the schoolwork," she said later. In the meantime, she had applied to nursing school.

Then months went by and Mrs. Rapacki heard nothing from Mrs. Gannon. When the librarian finally phoned her, Mrs. Gannon told her she had not heard anything from the nursing school. "I just figured they decided I was too old." Well, that was like waving a red flag at Jackie Rapacki, recalled Mrs. Gannon. "She called the school and was told they had no record of my application." Fortunately, the librarian knew when it had been sent because the two women had filled it out together, and she also had a record of a conversation about the application with someone in the admissions office after it had been received by them. The school immediately reinstated Mrs. Gannon as of the date she had actually sent in her application, so she wouldn't have to start the procedure all over again.

In the meantime, the school had changed their entrance requirements. Applicants were no longer required to take courses, but only to pass entrance examinations in biology and chemistry. Mrs. Rapacki lent Mrs. Gannon a set of biology self-learner books and she went through the first six of them to pass the test. She was admitted to the nursing school. In October 1978 she started classes as a full-time student. She's on her own now—no longer an independent learner, although she calls the librarian from time to time.

Mrs. Gannon thought back over her experience recently, and this is part of what she had to say:

"Jackie Rapacki would come up with suggestions that you could really use. But she always tried to find out where you were coming from first. She would ask questions or listen to you to get your feelings and then she always had great ideas about how to do what you wanted. She could tell you whom to get in touch with, how to go about it, what materials to look up, and where to find them. She would even get them for you in some cases.

"What she didn't know, she would look up. If you weren't clear about something, she would explain it to you. I could write to people and talk to them but I wouldn't

learn as much as I would from talking to her because she seemed to have a better understanding of how to get to the core of things. And she wouldn't let an idea drop. She was tenacious. She would make you think that an idea would work—that you could make it work. Just when you would be thinking that this was as far as it was going to go and that nothing else was going to happen, she'd show you where to turn.

"When I didn't hear from the school about my application, for example, and I figured that was that, she called the college. She knew whom to ask for and how to trace the papers down. You can see doors closed on you pretty fast if you don't know what you're doing. And you feel unsure of yourself. But Jackie acts like she knows what she's doing and that sometimes makes all the difference.

"If you decide you want to do something, Jackie throws out the line. If you grab it, she won't let it go."

In this situation, the importance of the librarian's supportive, nurturing role is very clear. Mrs. Gannon's ambition was frustrated by self-doubt and inertia and by having to solve a fairly complicated set of questions about qualifications and credentials. Although Mrs. Gannon followed through with her part in the relationship, she was sometimes ineffective in what she did. Consequently, Mrs. Rapacki not only showed her doors to walk through but, when necessary, as in the case of the lost application, she opened them for her. As Mrs. Gannon gains confidence through her learning experience, she can be expected to gain in her ability to cope successfully. In the meantime, Mrs. Rapacki and the other librarians are there to help her over some of the hurdles.

The Perceptive Librarian

David Carr, a doctoral candidate at Rutgers University, has examined 113 learning "episodes" in his study of the relationship between the independent learner and the librarian.

He has found that "the librarian's most significant role lies, not in finding information or in supplying methodology, but rather in giving honest approval to the learner by saying 'You can do this' and 'Here are some alternatives' and 'You can do any one of these things.'" He notes that the librarian's primary focus must be the person being helped, not the subject matter of the project or the materials being gathered. "It is extremely difficult work for both partners. It is difficult to begin, difficult to clarify, difficult to act, difficult to deal with interruptions, and difficult to close the assistance relationship. But the learning is immense. The experience is not a small thing in people's lives. People are helped through real life passages, through substantial changes in status."

As one librarian puts it, "You have to be willing to talk to people all the time. You can't get away with just talking briefly with them. You have to be willing to work hard with everyone and try to find out what they really want."

Listening is far more difficult than most people imagine. It requires self-discipline and the ability to set aside one's own values. If the librarian's value structure is strong, it is almost impossible to listen. A Woodbridge librarian tells this story about herself to illustrate this point. A woman in her late thirties, who wanted to go back to work, came in to see the librarian after she'd heard her speak about the advisory service at a PTA meeting. The woman didn't know what work she wanted, but she definitely was not going back to school--she'd had it with school. She would not drive a car, even though Woodbridge has virtually no public transit system. She was not going to work early in the morning or late in the afternoon. And she wasn't going to work for free, either.

So extreme were the limitations the woman had placed on herself that the librarian could see absolutely no purpose in trying to work with her. Then she had an idea. She asked the woman to put a pin on a map at the point where the woman lived, and then draw a circle at the farthest point she was willing to walk to work. The librarian

suggested the woman identify businesses within that area by using the telephone directory, the industrial directory, and legwork. If the woman would let the librarian know what businesses she had found, they could look up the appropriate job descriptions in the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. If the woman was still interested, she could start writing letters or visit the firms.

Sure enough, two weeks later the woman came in and asked, "What does an optician's assistant do?" An optician in her neighborhood was willing to employ her on her terms. If she did well and liked it, he would teach her how to grind lenses as well. "She took the job and she loves it," says the librarian, "and I wouldn't have given two cents for her chances." The woman had her own priorities well in mind and the fact that they didn't coincide with the librarian's priorities was of no consequence, except insofar as they almost blocked the librarian from doing her job.

Clarifying a learner's goals is a sometimes difficult but absolutely essential step in developing a learning project. "Basically what I do with potential learners for the first few sessions," explains Jackie Rapacki, "is to get them to talk about what it is they want, because they are not always sure. I ask questions to see if I am getting the picture of what they are trying to say. Often we find that what they want is something very different from what they ask for.

"I remember one woman who told me she wanted to learn everything there was to know about law. When I questioned her about it, she snapped back, 'Are you here to help me or give me the third degree?' I told her that law was a very broad subject and, since this was the first time I had worked with it, it would be helpful if she could be patient so I could get an idea of what she wanted to learn.

"Well, it finally turned out that what the woman really wanted was a promotion. She worked in the security section of a large bank in New York City and had been passed over for promotion several times, even though she felt she was doing her job well. When she saw on the office bulle-

tin board that one of her co-workers who had been promoted had a degree from a school of criminal justice, she concluded that he got his promotion because of the degree. She was willing to do anything to get her promotion because she needed the extra money to buy a house in New Jersey and get her kids out of the city."

Once she understood the learner's true objective, Mrs. Rapacki took steps to learn what the requirements were for promotion in that particular job. Her letter of inquiry to the president of the bank where the woman worked ended the learning project. That inquiry was all it took for the woman's competence to be recognized. She didn't have to study law.

When the independent learner's service first started up at Woodbridge, the postman for the Port Reading branch saw the posters advertising the service and requested a private meeting with Mrs. Rapacki. He confessed chagrin at never having obtained a high school diploma. His secret would soon be exposed because job promotions were coming up for which he believed a high school diploma was a basic requirement. He had taken the high school equivalency tests in the Army in 1957 but had failed.

"He would not go into a classroom and admit to people that he didn't have a diploma," recalls Mrs. Rapacki, "but if I would work with him privately and not let anyone know, then he would try one more time.

"I begged him to dig up the Army papers for me, but he kept putting it off because he didn't want to look for them when his wife and kids were in the house. Finally I told him I would do anything he wanted—I would meet with him six times a week; find a closet where we could hide to study—but not until he got me the papers. When he did bring them in, we discovered that he hadn't failed at all. He had passed, but because he had taken the test on two separate days, each part had been marked as an incomplete. He did not know that all he had to do to get his high school certificate was to write to the Army and request it."

The postman's fears were not unusual. A young woman let her fear of essay questions stand in the way of obtaining the high school equivalency diploma she needed in order to get the job she wanted. She contacted the Woodbridge library to find out if there was an adviser who would explain what an essay was and help her prepare for the exam. Imagine her relief when she saw the sample essays. "Is that all it is? Good Lord, all that wasted time!" The adviser called her local high school and arranged for the teacher to meet with the young woman before class started and give her encouragement. She began classes immediately and soon received her diploma.

"People's inadequacies are basically in their heads," observes one adviser. "They're much brighter than they ever think they are. They just don't know what is available in their communities, or if they do, they feel they are not qualified to take advantage of it."

Very often, learners shift goals. They change their minds about what they want and go on to a different learning project. Librarians must be attuned to what is happening and not let learners feel that they have failed because they didn't complete a project. "For instance," explains Mrs. Rapacki, "there was a young woman who came to the library to learn to speak Spanish. Her husband was Spanish-speaking but she was not. She felt left out when he and his family spoke Spanish at family get-togethers.

"We provided her with records and books. We made sure she had a tape recorder so she could play back her lessons while doing her housework, because she found it difficult to sit down and do them because of her children."

When she'd come in to talk about her progress in learning Spanish, she'd also chat with Mrs. Rapacki about herself. "When you work with a learner on a project, you often become an outlet, a person they can talk to. You're not the next-door neighbor, so they can tell you things about themselves they don't want the next-door neighbor to know. One of this woman's problems was that she felt that the world was passing her by. Her husband was get-

ting raises and promotions and she was still where she always had been, feeling a little inadequate and sensitive."

Gradually she decided that she didn't necessarily want to learn Spanish; she just wanted to feel accepted and respected for herself. The Spanish lessons made her aware that she could learn and she decided to go down to the community college and take a course—just one—to try it out. She took one course, then two, and eventually earned an associate degree in psychology. She is currently working toward her baccalaureate at a nearby state college.

"Basically," says Mrs. Rapacki, "I feel her learning experience had nothing to do with Spanish or psychology or any other subject—it was the result of getting to know herself and learning to feel good about what she did. The real reason she came to me was that she felt stifled and wanted to grow." Clearly, the most important role for the librarian in this case was to listen and be supportive.

At the Woodbridge Public Library, individual learners tended eventually to move on to more structured learning situations—Mr. Fino went on to real estate school and Mrs. Gannon to nursing school. This pattern has been a peculiarity of Woodbridge learners. In the other libraries in the original experimental project, people came in to learn many different things that required an unstructured situation—making birch-bark canoes; starting a fishing fleet; learning about American art; seeking costuming ideas for a nineteenth-century paper doll business. Woodbridge has had a few people with diverse interests. There was a shy woman who wanted to learn the kinds of things people learned in college because her kids were college students, and she wanted to keep up. So far, she and the librarian have gone through American literature from Benjamin Franklin to Walt Whitman. Another, somewhat eccentric woman took advantage of the service in order to become an accomplished writer of complaint letters to landlords, government officials, and other authority figures.

Edwin Beckerman, the director of the Woodbridge Public Library, suggests that this tendency toward struc-

tured situations may occur because Woodbridge is a traditional, hierarchical community which prefers the security of the familiar classroom setting. It may also be that the Woodbridge library simply hasn't learned how to reach its full range of potential learners. A recent sample of both library users and nonusers in the township suggests that there exists a potential patronage for the learner's advisory service of roughly 15 percent of the population. A good portion of that group had been totally unaware of the service. It can take years to find such an audience and to get across this new concept of public library service, unfamiliar to a public that still thinks of the library as a place to borrow books.

But however pragmatic the learning projects, the librarians' rewards have been as satisfying as those of the learners, both in exercising their skills as librarians and in helping people make significant changes in their lives. Comments one Woodbridge librarian, "What we have been called on to do has been exhilarating. It is definitely satisfying when you can work in partnership with your learner. The library is an extremely important learning center; I really wish that proper planning and training for using it could be provided."

The librarian who made these remarks strongly resisted the innovative service when it was introduced at Woodbridge in 1973. And Jeff Kesper himself, who worked so effectively with Joe Fino and many other learners, at one time was spokesman for the group of dissident librarians at Woodbridge. Woodbridge librarians are not unique. Their resistance parallels the reaction of most librarians wherever this in-depth, long-term, personalized service is introduced. There has been a feeling among some leaders in the field that librarians are uncomfortable performing this work and will never accept it. But the change in the attitude of the Woodbridge librarians suggests a considerably brighter future for the service, at least so far as the floor librarians are concerned.

Librarian Resistance to Advisory Services

It is difficult, now, to look back and understand the resistance. Jeff Kesper had come to Woodbridge Public Library fresh from his graduate library studies at Rutgers University. His arrival at Woodbridge coincided with the director's decision to join eight other libraries across the country in this experimental adult independent learning project, a decision that required Kesper and his colleagues not only to add an additional service to their present duties but also to provide a depth of service that neither their training in library school nor their experience had prepared them for.

Although extensive special training was provided, it was not an easy transition for many of them. Part of the problem was the resistance to change that can be expected at the introduction of any innovative program. Recalls Kesper now, "I think the major problem that librarians adding this program would have to watch out for would be staff attitudes.

"The key problem initially was that the floor librarians, the ones who actually worked with the patrons, had to add this program to their already full work loads and were accountable for its success. There should have been more discussion about it in the initial states—about its fundamentals and how it would fit into our regular program—not only to tell the staff about it but to help them accept it.

"That was never done. Since we were not a part of the decision to implement the project, we did not feel a part of the project, although we were doing the work. It was just thrown on us and that created a lot of hard feelings."

Kesper's chief objection was finding time for the project. "We wanted to know about priorities. 'Where does this fit in? If you give us this, what are you going to take away?'" His acceptance of it came when the time log kept by the project librarians showed that the time spent on the project was not that great—only four or five hours a week.

"When I looked at it on paper, the time wasn't there to complain about and that helped me a lot. It then became easier for me to fit the work into my pattern of operation. It became just another duty."

As Kesper worked with patrons and absorbed some of the reading about the philosophy of librarianship embodied in the service, he found that "it became a natural extension of the way I work, rather than something that was added to everything else."

The records bear out his statement. They show that Kesper is one of the most active librarians at Woodbridge in encouraging patrons to become independent learners.

Among the other Woodbridge librarians, the greatest confusion and resentment grew over the issue of counseling. Although this issue never bothered Kesper, to a number of these librarians it seemed that being a learner's adviser was doing counseling—something appropriate for social workers but not librarians. The Woodbridge librarian who today finds learner's advisory work "exhilarating" was one of the group who became alarmed over this issue. She recently explained that although the workshop leaders kept saying they knew the group were librarians, not counselors, and were being asked to do library work, not counseling, the thrust of the workshops was indeed to show librarians how to be counselors or teachers and tell people what would be best for them. Their anxiety was reinforced by the numbers of patrons who did come in and say, in essence, "Tell me what to do with my life." How were they to serve these people?

The key to ironing this out was slow in coming. At Woodbridge, it was linked to the growing realization that not everyone who seeks out the service can function as an independent learner because only certain patrons possess the combination of motivation and sense of responsibility that enables them to utilize the help of the advisers. Once the librarians realized that they did not have to succeed with everyone who applied for the independent learner's program, they easily found their proper roles. They were

not making decisions for people. They were participants with their learners in a common task—a matter of mutual discovery and learning.

The authors of an article on learners' advisory service scheduled to appear in the fall 1979 issue of *Library Trends*, who were involved in the learners' advisory programs in Portland and in Tulsa, suggest that perhaps a lack of professional self-reliance, rather than a denial of the appropriateness of the role, underlies "all the procedural and semantic arguments against such library service . . . doctors 'recommend,' lawyers 'advise,' teachers 'suggest'; yet the decision to accept their opinions remains with the individual requesting their help. Librarians must feel as qualified in their professionalism as they perceive other professionals to be."

There's little concern about counseling at Woodbridge today. New librarians accept advisory work as a normal part of their activities. As for those who have served as advisers since the service was introduced, their sentiments are summarized by the Woodbridge librarian who sees the advisory service as an appropriate extension of basic reference service: "We are a resource center and this is simply an efficient, organized way of providing resources."

Director Beckerman agrees. "It is an expansion of what librarians were already doing. I think the gap we had to bridge seemed much broader before we did it. A good deal of the training actually was directed at making us more effective at fulfilling our traditional roles. We librarians have to recognize that our basic concern is with the individual. There is no such thing as the library public. Each patron is a public and I think we have to respond to their needs as we perceive them."

David Carr reports, "The evidence indicates that the service uses librarians well; it uses libraries well; and it certainly helps the people who come in, in very essential ways."

Although many, perhaps most, forward-thinking librarians believe that the kind of in-depth, individualized service

exemplified by the Independent Learner Project is in the mainstream of the direction in which public library reference service must move in the years ahead, there are only a tiny handful of libraries actively providing this type of service. In addition to Woodbridge, the libraries that today are known to offer learners' advisory services are Tulsa, Salt Lake City, Minneapolis, Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn.

The service has not been well understood by librarians or by the public, for it requires a new perspective on the library and the role played by both the librarian and the user. It will take doses of time, dedication, special training, and money for the concept to become established.

Education Information Programs

An easier philosophy of service to grasp, for both the public and librarians, is the library-based education information programs that have been developed in response to the spectacular growth in adult education and the many diverse programs that have sprung up around the country. Colleges and universities are modifying their traditional programs to attract working adults and mature women who are returning to the job market. More flexible admission standards, classes held off-campus (sometimes in public libraries), and Saturday-only classes have become commonplace. Options open to potential adult students have been enormously increased by the development of fully accredited, nontraditional education programs.

Although nontraditional education takes many forms, the emphasis is on non-classroom study and independent learning. Programs are geared to working adults who frequently cannot find the time or money to pursue traditional classroom instruction. Nontraditional programs leading toward recognized academic accreditation include:

Correspondence courses. More than fifty member colleges and universities of the National University Extension

Association offer correspondence courses, ranging from accounting to writing, for which undergraduate credit is given; seven institutions offer graduate credit by correspondence. These courses are designed for those who study at home or prefer to work at their own pace.

Proficiency examinations. These allow students to earn full course credit by examination without attending class. One of the best known is the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) initiated by the College Entrance Examination Board in the mid-1960s. CLEP tests are offered in more than fifty college subjects for which credit may be received, at eighteen hundred participating colleges and universities. Since 1971, over a million CLEP tests have been taken. It does not matter where, when, or how students learned the subject matter; if the results of their tests are acceptable to their colleges, they receive credit. Some institutions allow as many as sixty credits to be earned through proficiency examination. The CLEP program offers no preparation guidance to students.

External degrees. Over one hundred colleges and universities in thirty-nine states offer recognized external degrees designed to serve those who, for whatever reason, are unable to attend institutions of higher learning. Some colleges, such as Empire State in New York and Thomas A. Edison in New Jersey, have no faculty, no classrooms, and no libraries. Credits are often earned by a combination of means —proficiency examinations, televised instruction, regular courses, life experience that can be shown to be the equivalent of a college-level competence in a given area, and sponsored instruction given by private companies such as Eastman Kodak and General Electric.

Clearly the potential adult student is very much in need of guidance information from a neutral source—a source whose primary concern is not furthering the interest of a particular institution or particular academic program, but rather the needs of the individual adult learner. The typical library shelf of college catalogs and education guides is

not a sufficient answer. Some new library-based programs designed to solve these problems are the following:

The Westchester Hotline. Since 1977, residents of Westchester County, New York, have been able to obtain free and fast information about learning opportunities in their area by dialing the library system's Adult Education Hotline.

The Hotline helped a Japanese woman learn to speak English; a young man become a harness race driver; a housewife learn Chinese cooking; a local health department official find information on the certification requirements for hospital administrators; and a nonreader find a tutor to teach him to read. Hotline staff guided a young woman with only six years of schooling into the adult basic education program offered by her local school district; regularly informs callers about the three ways to get a high school equivalency diploma and how to earn a college degree without attending classes through "nontraditional" programs such as Empire State College or the Regents External Degree.

The Hotline is staffed weekdays from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. At other times, calls are answered with a recorded message. Potential learners are invited to leave their name, phone number, and a brief statement of their learning need on an answering machine, so they may be called back the next working day.

According to the adult services consultant of the system, "The Hotline was seen as a means of introducing Westchester adults to the concept of public libraries as educational resources; maintaining and expanding channels of communication and cooperation between libraries and other members of the education community; providing a needed service to adult learners; focusing the attention of member libraries on the needs of adult learners; documenting the demand for such a service; and developing a strong base for an educational information and referral service which might later be decentralized within the system."

Data on calls to the Hotline is collected and recorded on

learner request forms. Procedures have been developed to ensure the anonymity of learners if they so desire. (Most do not.) Learners are asked their area (subject) of interest; level of interest (basic education to doctoral, credit or noncredit); the times they are free to learn; if they are willing to commute and how far. The action taken (information given, referral made, material sent) is recorded.

This data has been used to direct development of the Hotline support files and collection. It documents the interest in lifelong learning, community by community, and the need for educational information and referral service. Data summaries allow feedback to member libraries and the Westchester academic community indicating the educational needs expressed by adults, which will be used in planning programs and services.

The Philadelphia Lifelong Learning Center. Since 1977, the Free Library of Philadelphia has operated a Lifelong Learning Center to assist out-of-school adults with career and educational planning. During its first two years of operation, the Center served more than four thousand clients. The project is funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, which originally proposed locating the Center in the library because of the library's neutrality, its thousands of related books and materials, and its important information dissemination role. Some of the services offered by the Center include individual counseling, telephone access, and information referral, computerized resources (a VICS–Vocational Information through Computer Services–terminal available at the Center provides current job forecasts and other information on more than 425 occupations in the Greater Philadelphia area), and workshops and support groups designed to help adults explore career and educational opportunities. As a clearinghouse for educational and career information, the Center often refers clients to organizations providing GED preparation; to agencies doing literacy training; and to local social service offices. The educational consultants provide the names of specific contact people in many local organizations.

A library spokesman says that "we assumed that, in a world peopled with diploma-conscious personnel directors, employees concerned with upward mobility would flock to the Center to learn the quickest route to a college diploma." The staff was stunned to discover that most people wanted help with basic education, high school equivalency, or reentry to the job market. Teachers and women in clerical positions were interested in upward mobility. "We also found massive job dissatisfaction."

While college brokering is still part of the Lifelong Learning Center process, the Center deals mainly with helping individuals overcome problems of unemployment due to job obsolescence, midlife career change, women returning to the job market, and career education and planning.

The Center has satellite locations at four branch libraries. Two additional satellites have been set up in State Employment Security Offices, where the Center's career counseling complements the state's job service function.

The director of the Center, Marge Pacer, has a master's degree in adult education. Six part-time counselors are also specialists in adult education. A professional librarian planned the Center's initial book collection, and a "project librarian" gathers and organizes up-to-date information on colleges, trade schools, adult evening and day courses, and other related subjects.

Like too many public library services, the Center faces the prospect of imminent budget cuts. "We're not giving up by any means," says Peggy Glover, coordinator of Services for Adults for the library. "We've asked for a small LSCA grant to provide self-instructional materials, and we are also looking into possibilities of some CETA funding. We're pursuing every lead."

The Free Library itself is under financial siege and therefore unable to absorb the project. Budget adjustments mandated in the summer of 1978 for an already lean budget forced a cut in 114 employees, reduced hours of service in the branches, eliminated bookmobile and institutional

service, and cut the library's book purchasing budget by 31 percent, leaving it seriously below minimum requirements. The mayor's proposed budget for fiscal 1980 proposes an additional major budget reduction.

The Reading (Pennsylvania) Lifelong Learning Center. A Lifelong Learning Center at Reading Public Library began operations in January 1977 as a career counseling and educational referral service. The underlying concept of the Center rested on the recognition that the library, while a rich depository for data, has a limited capacity to "process it in individualized ways." For this reason, the principal mission of the Center was to improve the transfer of information through the mediation of specialized counselors. The staff consisted of two full-time counselors—one with training in the counseling field, the other with advanced training in library science. "In the beginning," explains Maryann Haytmanek, the career counselor on the staff, "I'd do all the counseling and go over with the librarian what I had done. We talked about the basic resources I'd used and how they related in the counseling situation. We really taught each other. I got to know a lot of the job hunting resources that are simply part of a reference library and I was able to share with her some guidance techniques."

By July 1977, six months after the opening, the Lifelong Learning Center had counted 1,653 contacts (Reading is a community of about 100,000 people). The overwhelming majority, 1,340 cases, were tallied as "information seekers." Client contacts requiring a personal meeting with the counselors numbered 313. A client reaction analysis performed by Pennsylvania State University's Center for the Study of Higher Education after the Center had been functioning for six months reported "high levels of satisfaction with the accessibility of services, quality of information, and relationships with the staff. The central and most valuable asset of the Center as perceived by the sample of clients is the interpersonal exchange with the staff."

The analysis revealed that clients gained not only from

the information and support offered by the counselors but from sharing the "*process of decision-making*"; in other words, the counselors successfully assisted clients with decisions about how to best use information for their own purposes. This was reflected, presumably, in the fact that a very high proportion of the respondents in the tabulation took some definite action that was in some way related to the association with the Center.

The kinds of needs users of the Center found important were nearly equally divided between educational and job-related topics, but employment matters took a top rating. "The major career-related information sought by clients was data on the educational requirements of jobs; information on job qualifications was next most mentioned."

The researchers reported, "The plan effected at Reading reflects an excellent appreciation for the nature of the community and the needs of its citizens. The data gathered here offer partial but forceful validation of the basic idea. Information about education and careers is useful and its value is multiplied by a counseling setting in which the user finds understanding, support, and guidance for decisions that lead to action."

The Center was forced to cease operations in June 1979, when its two-year demonstration grant from the Bureau of Vocational Education in the Pennsylvania Department of Education came to an end. The library itself was not able to finance the Center, its own budget having been cut back by the city. In the closing days of operation, the counselors were preparing a manual that would provide step-by-step self-help guidance in the use of the resources they had assembled.

The Winston-Salem ACE Project. In 1975 the Forsyth County Public Library in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, initiated a three-year project in Adult Continuing Education (ACE) with funds from the Library Services and Construction Act. Starting with fiscal year 1979, funding for ACE has been provided by county funds as a part of regular library service.

ACE was formed at the request of the Academic Urban Affairs Consortium, a council representing the major educational institutions in Forsyth County, and the Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce. The consortium needed a center of education information in the community. The potential adult learner in Forsyth County faced over 250 agencies offering some type of program for adults, each program with different rules, different costs, different times, different advantages and disadvantages. Such a learner needed reliable help from a neutral source in finding his or her way to a program that suited his educational level, financial condition, and life situation.

The ACE desk is open to the public about seventy hours a week for counseling, information, and referral to learning opportunities. The desk serves an average of thirty patrons a day, the large majority of them through personal contact. ACE has responsibility for all library activities in the areas of career information, test preparation, financial aid information, job hunting skills, finding high schools for adults, educational references beyond high school, Adult Basic Education, and college catalogs.

ACE publishes a bimonthly Community Calendar of Current Educational Opportunities, a series of handsomely produced source books providing practical information on such matters as high school diplomas for adults, CLEP (college credit-by-examination), job hunting, office skills, paying for education, and a well-indexed and attractive directory to adult continuing education in the county.

ACE also programs workshops and lecture series for job hunters and potential adult learners, and maintains close contacts with community agencies. Says staff member Diane Burrows, "Involvement with agencies in the community is as essential a part of the ACE service as ordering books is essential to having a library. That's our resource, the community, so we have to keep in touch."

A policy of monthly community walks—visiting approximately twenty agencies each month—was undertaken in 1977 as a means of meeting agency staff, sharing informa-

tion, and discussing common problems. As a result, the number of ACE patrons referred from community agencies has steadily increased. The walks also stimulated increased cooperative efforts among agencies. ACE has served as the adult education leader in the community, particularly as an advocate for adult learning needs and as the organizer of a community education council in the county.

With the exception of the director of ACE, Ann Gehlen, staff members were not librarians at the time they were hired. Instead, they were selected on the basis of their involvement in the community, an ability to talk comfortably with people, backgrounds in special skills such as publishing. But involvement of the ACE staff with the library has been so intense that all three staff members have now completed or soon will complete the requirements to become masters in library science.

Diane Burrows has thought a lot about the reasons why ACE was fortunate enough to be funded by the county commissioners when so many good programs in other communities have gone down the drain for lack of funds. "We made a commitment to develop our service in response to needs that were perceived, rather than following a prescribed format. We have been willing to cooperate with practically any agency in town on practically anything that was in our ball park. We all took immense pride in what we were doing, and I think that helped to sell the service without high-powered publicity." Publicity for the program has come through their publishing program, through participation in meetings and involvement with community agencies, plus public service announcements on the radio from time to time. "I can't think of a single segment of the community that would not potentially have some use for the service, and I think that was an important factor. We really try to be a community-wide service and not only deal with middle-class housewives, or with minority groups, or the under- or well-educated. Communities are more comfortable using local tax dollars to fund a broad-gauge service.

"The hardest thing we did, which I am convinced was essential to our being picked up [in the county budget], was to get the support of the rest of the library staff. This is important in terms of how hard the library director feels he can fight for a program without damaging his organization. We tried not to develop our own closed territory, but to extend ourselves to participate in library activities. Some cross-training was done—we learned to work their desks, they learned some things about working ours—so we didn't seem to be 'strangers who did counseling.' It was important to make sure the director knew what we were doing and understood the value of it. Our support in the community helped a lot with that."

The Federal Educational Information Centers (EIC) program. Enacted as part of the Education Amendments of 1976, which became operational for the first time in fiscal 1978, EIC offers an opportunity for substantial public library participation. The program provides state grants to plan, establish, and operate centers to provide educational information, guidance and counseling, as well as educational referrals for all state residents. In the plan proposed for the state of Michigan, public libraries are the designated agencies for the centers, and in Missouri the State Library has been made responsible for developing the state's plan. The program was funded for $3 million in fiscal 1979, despite the administration's opposition to the program on the grounds that other federal programs already handle the problem. Future funding is uncertain.

The Growth of Nontraditional Study

The Commission on Nontraditional Study, formed in 1971 by the College Entrance Examination Board and the Educational Testing Service, examined the entire range of nontraditional study to formulate specific recommendations for the future. In its 1973 report, *Diversity by Design*, the commission recommended that the public library should be strengthened to become a far more powerful instrument

for nontraditional education. The commission urged college and university faculty members and administrators to work with public librarians in developing nontraditional study opportunities at the postsecondary level.

Today, public libraries are cooperating with nearby colleges to provide classroom space, equipment and space for viewing course lectures on video tape, as well as providing backup study materials. They make it easier for people who find the atmosphere of their neighborhood library less intimidating than that of a large college or university; for working people who find it convenient to drop in at the local library in the evenings for classes or study; and for the housewife whose problems are finding time, baby-sitters, and transportation to use the local library as a campus.

A joint effort of the Chicago Public Library and the City Colleges of Chicago allows students to pursue courses for credit in eight different city libraries (plus the Cook County jail). Students can do all their required work and have consultations with faculty and counselors in the public library. The method of study uses video and audio cassettes in conjunction with texts, study guides, and a library full of related readings. A recent addition is a newspaper course offered by the University of California. Lectures are published weekly in the Chicago press and students are graded on papers they prepare after reading each lecture.

The program provides a simple, unstructured, and inexpensive way to start college. Texts, study guides, and audiovisual materials are available in each participating library. The program aims to help mature students through their first two years of college as quickly as possible so that they can pursue their objectives in a four-year college. Since its inception in 1973, approximately twelve hundred adults have gone through the program.

In addition to providing college credit courses, the joint program also helps students to prepare for high school equivalency and CLEP examinations or simply to seek personal enrichment. It has attracted such diverse patrons

as mature people over thirty with little or no formal education; people well educated in another tongue but who are weak in English; young people who have been in correctional institutions, or are on welfare, or who have had their education interrupted for one reason or another; and those already in college who want to squeeze in additional courses.

In May 1976 eight Long Island residents earned their master's degrees in business administration through the Port Washington Public Library and Adelphi University. They were part of a group of fifty-eight students working toward bachelor's and master's degrees at the Port Washington Library. More than twenty-two Long Island public libraries became off-campus centers of learning in cooperation with half a dozen nearby colleges and universities.

Adults at the Oshkosh (Wisconsin) Public Library have earned credits acceptable at the University of Wisconsin. Course materials at the library include slide tape audiovisual lectures, reading, and syllabus exercises available during regular library hours. Faculty for each course came to the library one evening a week.

The Andover (Massachusetts) Memorial Hall Library has provided classroom space for college courses conducted by nearby Northern Essex Community College. The arrangement grew out of a two-day seminar at the library on problems women face when returning to school and to work.

After a survey revealed that downtown Albuquerque employees wanted continuing education opportunities during the noon hour and after work, the Albuquerque Public Library, under the auspices of the University of New Mexico, began offering five college credit classes ranging from elementary and conversational Spanish to fundamentals of library science.

Both the St. Louis Public Library and the St. Louis County Library have cooperated with the innovative University of Mid-America, a consortium of state universities in Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa that offers college

credit through home study, intensive reading, and discussions at the libraries or other learning centers, supplemented by television. St. Louis Public Library, for example, has offered courses on video cassettes. The University of Mid-America loaned the library a video-cassette machine and TV set as well as all of the course materials. The library set these aside in a special room so that anyone enrolled in the program can come down to do his work at any time when the library is open.

The St. Louis Public Library also administers CLEP examinations and those of the American College Testing Proficiency Examination Program, in addition to providing guidance and preparation resources for students.

St. Louis, like a number of other libraries, now offers a course in how to use the library. Classes meet Saturday mornings for eight weeks and are free. Such courses are a direct response to the needs of adult students, particularly those participating in nontraditional programs.

Quality Educational Service for the Small Community Library

Are substantial sums of money or large staffs required to enable a public library to provide exemplary educational service to its community? The answer, happily, is a resounding no.

In a 1962 report on children's work in selected public libraries for the New York State Library, author Dorothy Broderick had this to say about the prerequisites for high quality library service: "The single most important fact gleaned from the mountains of statistics is that a library can be as good as the librarian and the Board of Trustees want to make it. There are good libraries in all population categories and the idea that the small library cannot give service is dispelled." Her conclusions are as relevant for adult services today as for children's services in the 1960s. By way of example, let's look at the public library in Putnam Valley, New York.

The Putnam Valley Public Library serves a largely rural community of 7,500. Although the total collection consists of only 25,500 volumes—about the equal of a children's collection in a well-stocked, medium-size library—it is still some 5,000 books over the state minimum for the size of the population served. The collection is an unusually rich one, thanks to the generosity of some of the residents, such as the publisher of fine art books who donates a copy of every book produced by his company.

The library, which recently moved into newly constructed quarters, is staffed by one professional librarian, two full-time assistants, two part-time clerk typists, and three student pages. It is open fifty-six hours a week including four evenings and, in the words of the director of the system to which the library belongs, "probably provides more varied services to more people than any other library in our area. It serves the young and the old; the well-to-do and the disadvantaged; the young students and the highly educated ones. It is truly a community center for all." It is a well-used library. In the system's five-county area, the Putnam Valley library ranks fourteenth in population served, but third in total circulation.

The director, Mrs. Lora Porter, a soft-spoken woman in her early fifties, has been associated with the library for the past sixteen years. She had been a teacher and a television writer before coming to Putnam Valley. She started at the library as a volunteer, became assistant librarian, and then director. Five years ago she acquired her master's degree in library science, thereby gaining professional status.

As her years at Putnam Valley went on, she became more committed to the *public* concept of libraries. "Traditionally, libraries were the province of the reader; the tool of the intellectual. They really didn't provide services and materials for people who might want to utilize some of the other services that are now beginning to be more widely offered by libraries. I have been fortunate in that I have always worked with a very supportive Board of Trustees who were committed to my kind of librarianship.

"One of the most important services that I felt compelled to bring to this library was service to the adult independent learner. Many years ago, long before I became involved in libraries, I began to see that our educational system was failing somewhere along the way. Great numbers of adults were 'stopping out' of school. This became so widespread that the schools of higher education began to change their traditional concepts, and the traditional standards of excellence that were demanded at college level began to disappear, or to become more practical. It was the beginning of the whole concept of open enrollment. Institutions eventually began to ask questions about education: Is it really necessary to go to a classroom three days a week, five days a week, or for an hour? Is there education that can come about through life learning and through life experience? Are there people who can learn by studying at home?"

That is when New York State established the Empire State College, a segment of the State University system comparable to many of the state universities, but very different in educational methods. The college offers nontraditional, individualized programs of study that are developed according to students' particular interests and educational needs. Under the guidance of a faculty mentor, a student draws up a learning contract which outlines goals and topics of study. The learning contract may include a variety of methods of study: independent study under the formal course work at another college, travel, independent research and correspondence, or media courses designed for self-study. By 1979 scores of colleges were offering this type of program.

"What was happening was that the public library was becoming the campus library to the independent learner and the public library's academic role was growing. Even before I became aware of it, we were helping several Empire State students in my library. I became very excited by the program. I determined to learn as much as I could about it and to begin to put money in my budget to improve and upgrade our reference collection to meet the

needs of this new group of people. I began to wonder how a small public library could help these people and my interest came to the attention of the head of adult services in the Mid-Hudson Library System."

Meanwhile the New York State Education Department was starting a program of educating library directors to work with independent learners. Each system was asked to gather together a team of directors who would be trained and would then come back to the system and teach the other member libraries what they had learned. Mrs. Porter was one of the people selected. She went to Albany and to Schenectady every few months over a period of eighteen months. "I brought back all the things I was learning. I started out by first letting the community know."

She mailed out press releases to community organizations and she talked to individuals and to groups. "I found out that Empire State held their monthly, one-night preorientation in nearby Yorktown and I found out where you could talk to people about the Regents External Degree program, a credit-by-examination program. I went to one of their preorientation sessions myself and learned what it was like—what they had to offer and what forms applicants had to fill out. I then sent out a letter to ten community groups about it.

"People who are reentering the education scene come with some shyness and reluctance; some are older people looking for new careers. When I have two or three or five who are interested in the Empire State College, I get them together and we go out to dinner and talk and then go as a group to the preorientation. In fact, I have gone through the entire orientation with a few who just needed that extra little bit of support. I have also mimeographed and displayed information sheets and posters about the various programs. Then, when people respond or become interested, I have the staff take their names and I call them. I have begun to make two Sunday mornings a month available to talk to these people personally.

"I try to get the staff to identify adult learners so that we know who they are and I really make a tremendous

effort to get these people materials. The system helps a great deal. We have a central reference source and if we indicate to them the requested material is for an adult learner, they put on a major effort."

The adult students using Putnam Valley library testify to the fact that they never lack for materials. Explained one adult student, "If the Putnam Valley library didn't have what I needed, Mrs. Porter always knew where she could get it for me." This student cited as an example hard-to-find English translations of French-language histories of Canada, which the library got for her from Albany.

Another student recalls, "If I need something and the librarian can't get it right away, she goes up to Poughkeepsie and gets it from their library. Sometimes she will even go up there to do some research on books I can't find." Another talks about the more than one hundred books this woman needed for a project in folk art which the librarian dug up from all over the state.

Today, there are many different ways in which students can obtain academic credit, and a multitude of approaches that Mrs. Porter, as a librarian, can use to help. Consider the experiences of Mrs. Barbara McGiven, a woman in her fifties who had had one year of college before she turned her considerable energies to caring for a home, a husband, and four sons thirty years ago. In 1977, with only one teenager still left at home, Mrs. McGiven enrolled in Empire State College. Not only did Mrs. Porter obtain the books and magazine articles that Mrs. McGiven needed for her studies in history, psychology, economics, and literature; when Mrs. McGiven's first term paper was returned to her for reworking, the librarian showed her how to revise her material.

Mrs. McGiven also enrolled in a course in American history taught by Mrs. Porter right at the Putnam Valley library. Marist College in Poughkeepsie provided the curriculum, the examinations, and the evaluation of the students' work. Empire State College accepted the credits Mrs. McGiven received for her work. Currently, the librarian is tutoring Mrs. McGiven in an English literature program,

which will be accepted for credit by Empire because Mrs. Porter has a master's degree in English. When Mrs. McGiven was having trouble studying textiles because the only courses offered in the subject were in New York City and were too expensive and too far away, the librarian located a resident in the Putnam Valley community who had been a teacher at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City and arranged for Mrs. McGiven to study with him. The college will accept his evaluation of her work.

Mrs. Porter judges that she has worked with fifty to sixty adult learners at the library, but none has made her prouder than Larry Kennedy. Twelve years ago Mr. Kennedy, a patrolman in a neighboring town, stopped by the library to find some books for a course on police administration he was taking at nearby Westchester Community College. A few other men on the force were taking it and Mr. Kennedy had signed up on a dare.

He never expected to pass. There was little in his past academic record to suggest that he would. Mr. Kennedy had been graduated from a New York City vocational high school with a D average. "I graduated," he says, "mainly because I was getting too old for the class and they couldn't throw me out any other way. My background and training were laughable: 'one and one are two —you've passed math'; 'string three words together without swearing—you've passed English.' Even with those low requirements, I was left back a year in English. The main thing they taught was shop; anything else was secondary." The school Mr. Kennedy had attended was the Bronx Vocational High School, the setting for Brian Hunter's searing tale of a teacher's life in the ghetto, *The Blackboard Jungle*. Says Kennedy, "He made it sound very nice. My last two years there, we had two murders each year."

The night he stopped at the Putnam Valley Public Library twelve years ago, Mr. Kennedy and Mrs. Porter got to talking. She felt challenged by what he told her of his background and felt the educational system had let him down. If ever an adult learner needed help, that learner was Mr. Kennedy. Together they found the research ma-

terials he wanted and she encouraged him to bring her the first paper he had to write for the course. "It was an absolute disaster," recalls Mrs. Porter. "I blue-penciled it and showed him how to rewrite it. He has always been very good about rewriting everything." Kennedy fills in the details, "I'd never heard of a colon or a semicolon; I used a comma every time I ran out of something to say. I had no idea of tenses; a four-syllable word was something dirty. She taught me how to phrase ideas, how to form sentences and paragraphs, how to understand the significance of different punctuation marks and how they are used. I picked all this up just from having her talk to me as she corrected my papers. When I first started going to her, she'd be moving paragraphs all over the paper."

Kennedy passed that first course and he took another. Then he started taking three courses a semester. He had to have algebra in order to get his two-year degree from the community college, so Mrs. Porter arranged for a high school boy to tutor him. "I used to go to school," says Kennedy, "take notes, come home, and we would go at it for a couple of hours. Then I'd sit down with the professor, who was also nice enough to give me extra assistance. I managed to pass with a C, although it's still not one of my strong suits."

Kennedy graduated from Westchester Community College in 1971 with a C+ average. From there, he went on to Mercy College to get his baccalaureate in criminal justice. He brought every paper that he ever wrote to Mrs. Porter at the library. He finished Mercy with a B average.

Kennedy began advancing in the police department. Westchester County, which does not have a county police department, decided to set up countywide education in police procedure for officers in all the towns and Mr. Kennedy was one of the people selected to teach some of the courses. He began writing his own material. He would bring it to Mrs. Porter at the library on Sunday mornings. She adds with a laugh, "I really became an authority on police procedure." Then Kennedy was accepted at C. W. Post for his master's program in criminal justice; he did his

dissertation on the parole system, and graduated with a B+ average, even though he was still having to go to school part-time. In the fall of 1978, Kennedy was accepted at Fordham University in a doctoral program. "But the most amazing thing of all," Mrs. Porter said, "is that he is now *teaching* two courses in the elements of criminal justice for Mercy College."

"Mrs. Porter taught me how to use the library," Mr. Kennedy recalled recently. "She gave me confidence and taught me to establish a rapport with literature. Prior to doing a paper, we would talk about the rough concept of what I wanted to say and we would talk over different ideas. We wouldn't stay only with the subject of the paper; we'd go off on tangents into other areas . . . things that I had covered before or things she felt I should cover or books she felt I should read. She'd make a special point of having them there to hand me when I walked in."

He was embarrassed to go back and tell her he hadn't read them, so he labored through the pages. "And really, it opened up new avenues of discussion. We would get started on something to do with the courts, say, and we'd go all around the horn and cover every subject but the courts; then just before it was time for me to go, she'd say, 'now on the courts' . . . and we'd spend two and three hours on that. It was a marvelous exchange for me because it taught me to feel at home with unfamiliar concepts. It gave me a good feeling about education that I'd never had before."

The Future of Learner's Advisory Services

What is the future for learner's advisory services in public libraries? Suzanne Boles and Barbara D. Smith, two of the service's staunchest supporters, in an article written for *Library Trends* magazine, are blunt about its prospects:

> The emergence of advisory services for adult learners will be a question of professional self-assess-

ment, of adaptability, of professional confidence, but most of all, of priorities. The decision of public libraries to perform these services is a policy matter which cannot be left up to the voluntary actions of a few committed librarians. As Lloid [*sic*] Jones stated in *The Changing Environment of Libraries*, "There are limits. There are budgets. There are policies. There are attitudes. But budgets can be raised. Policies can be revised. Attitudes can be changed. Not without effort. Not without time. Not without more frequent, more regular, and more mutual communication than an occasional colloquium. Not, in short, without commitment."

Perhaps library policy-makers can get their cue from the commitment instilled in the adult learners who have benefited from the pilot programs already in operation. Mr. Kennedy from Putnam Valley, for instance.

Mr. Kennedy is in his forties now. He isn't sure what he will do once he finishes his doctorate. "I like teaching. I am in a position now to do for somebody else what my teachers did not do for me." He adds, laughing, "I'm getting very frustrated with the inability of the students to do a term paper. We're getting freshmen straight out of high school with a worse education than I had, if that's possible. I don't even teach a course; I teach doing term papers and using the library." As Mrs. Porter did for him, Kennedy puts in extra time with the students who need special help. He will arrive at school at seven or eight o'clock in the morning before classes start at nine, to work with a student. If a student can't manage to come at another time, he will have the class work independently while he takes the troubled student aside.

"My time is not so valuable that I can't give it to someone I think needs it or wants it," he explains, adding finally, "Mrs. Porter made me comfortable with what I was doing. She made me feel that I could succeed. Maybe I can do a little of that for someone else."